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Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 5B6
Aug. 17, 1990

Dear Mr. Weisberg,

I have been involved in my own personal research related to the JFK assassination over the past four years, and have two articles on file with AARC ("Priscilla and Lee: Before and After" and "The Man Who Heard Too Much" about Richard Giesbrecht of Winnipeg).

Recently I came across your book Photographic Whitewash at the Surrey library in suburban Vancouver (they also have copies of Whitewash I and II, and I also located a used edition of the paperback edition of Whitewash published by Dell.) On page 127 you make reference to an 8-mm film taken prior to the assassination, supposedly at 12:20, according to Thomas Buchanan, repeated by an FBI report and the Warren Report itself. As you point out, it obviously could not be the Robert Hughes film if the time of 12:20 is correct (Hughes film was part of a Life report in Nov. 1967 which also included Hugh Betzner's photo showing the "black dog" on the grassy knoll partially obscuring what looks like a bald-headed man to me. Could that have been Roscoe White of the Dallas Police, identified last week by his son as one of three assassins involved based on a diary that he claims the FBI has?) It has occurred to me that possibly this 8-mm film was that taken by Charles Bronson, although according to several reports I have, it was taken around 12:24. Bronson's film apparently was examined by the FBI and returned to him.

In regard to Bronson's film, I wrote to David Lifton earlier this year in regard to a photo included in his book Best Evidence which he indicates was taken by Bronson, and yet it shows the motorcade and appears to have been taken from an area near the railrodd tracks near Commerce or Main and not from across the street near the TSBD. Do you know if Bronson moved from his original position and continued filming, or is this a mistake on Lifton's part?(I never received a reply from him.)

In your book you make no reference to another alleged film referred to by Sgt. Dean during his first two days of testimony. Supposedly he was sent a film of the motorcade taken by a man named Ralph Simpson in Victoria, B.C. , but the film never arrived (addressed to Sgt. Dean.) Mr. Simpson, who might have actually been Ralph Smele using his mother's maiden name, or a relative visiting Victoria) did not want to send the film to the Warren Commission so Sgt. Dean, who spoke to him by phone prior to testifying, suggested he mail it to him at the Dallas Police office (possibly a foolish move.) I spoke to Sgt. Dean in July, 1987 and he remembered the incident very clearly (I also wrote to him twice) and was still convinced that Mr. Simpson/Smele was not playing games, especially since he could describe the area where he was standing so well. When I learned from Mr. Smele's sister-in-law that he was an alcoholic and not very reliable (he died in 1982 but lived at the same address listed in the Dean interview all those years with the same phone # given by Dean), I phoned Dean with this information, but he insisted that the caller was completely sober and concerned. By the way, he indicated to Dean that he had not developed the film (and therefore had not tried to "cash in

on it). I learned later from Blakey's book that Dean had been brought to Washington D.C. after his first interview in Dallas, and kept their until his third interview in June before the Warren Commission, except to be returned to Dallas for his second interview. It could be that the film arrived in his absence and was possibly passed on to the FBI or destroyed, for that matter, by the Dallas Police. When I spoke to Sgt. Dean, he stated to me that he always suspected it had been "intercepted by the authorities." It certainly would be interesting to know where the frame or photo from Best Evidence came from if it is not actually part of Bronson's footage. By the way, when I spoke to Mrs. Smele as well as a nephew who lives in Surrey, neither of them knew that Ralph Smele's address and phone # were listed in the Warren volumes and knew nothing about an alleged phone call by a "Ralph Simpson" from that residence. Even Sylvia Meagher had not tried to contact him, although she makes reference to the comments of Sgt. Dean in her book (I wrote to her in 1987 but she replied that she was not well and couldn't be of any help; she did indicate when I spoke to her by phone that she had not attempted to call Mr. Smele/Simpson.) I did learn from AARC that an ABC reporter from Dallas did phone in the company of Sgt. Dean and his wife from Washington, but was told by Smele/Simpson that he had been told by the authorities not to discuss the subject. I wrote to Martin about the subject in Dallas but never heard from him. I also received notes from AARC written by Earl Golz in the course of an interview with Dean in 1978 in which Dean made brief reference to Simpson/Smele, but Golz informed me that he never followed up on that particular aspect of the case.

As you probably know, in regard to the Betzner photo, the House Assassination Committee hoped to have the negative analyzed by computer through Dr. Hunt, who testified that it could not be located by Life (I suspect that Itek still has it.) As a result the inferior Willis photo showing the same black figure on the wall was analyzed but it was too blurry to reveal anything. I wrote to Betzner, whose address was provided by his parents in Kansas City (their home had been mentioned in the Nov. 24, 1967 Life report)
. I learned from his mother that she was sent a large black and white glossy print of the photo, which might be interesting to examine. I also spoke to John Wolfe at Itek, who had appeared with Dan Rather on the Nov. 1975 CBS four-part special, and he indicated he would check on the whereabouts of the Betzner negative but never got back to me. He had claimed on the CBS special that although it appears that JFK's head is moving backwards faster than it subsequently moved forward at frame 312-13, it is an optical illusion, and that in fact his head moved forward much faster than it did backwards. If this is the case, all that proves to me is that Kennedy was propelled by one shot from the rear in a forward motion until â moment later when he was propelled backwards by a second shot from the knoll, as suggested by Josiah Thompson in Six Seconds in Dallas. This possibility was not considered by Wolfe and Rather (and Wolfe's analysis was not used by the HSAC who chose the "jet effect").

I hope you have recovered from open heart surgery as mentioned in AARC's newsletter earlier this year, and will be able to reply to my letter.

Yours sincerely,

Peter R. Whitmey